

IN THE CLAIMS

8. (currently amended) A method Method for applying manganese phosphate layers to iron or steel surfaces comprising contacting workpieces with a phosphating solution comprising

0.2 to 4 g/l of iron (II) ions

10 to 25 g/l of manganese ions

25 to 50 g/l of phosphate ions (calc. As P_2O_5)

3 to 35 g/l of nitrate ions

0.5 to 5 g/l of nitroguanidine

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said solution having 7 to 24 points of free acid, 50 to 140 points of total acid, and an S value of 0.2 to 1, and drying the workpieces to form a manganese phosphate layer ~~wherein, after drying, the manganese phosphate layer~~ having a minimum thickness of 2 μm and an average maximum roughness depth (R^2) of 2.5 μm

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 8, wherein said phosphating solution that comprises 0.5 to 2 g/l of nitroguanidine.
10. (previously presented) A method according to claim 8, wherein the phosphating solution comprises not more than 2.5 g/l of iron (II) ions.
11. (previously presented) A method according to claim 8, wherein the workpiece is steel and said phosphating solution comprises a complex-forming agent for the alloying constituents of the steel.
12. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein said coupler-forming agent is citric acid.
13. (currently amended) A method according to claim 8, wherein said phosphating solution further comprises at least one metal ion selected from the group consisting of

0.2 to 4 g/l of nickel ions and

0.2 to 4 g/l of magnesium ions.

14. (previously presented) A method according to claim 8, wherein at least a portion of the manganese ions in said phosphating solution are replaced by manganese carbonate to neutralize free acid.
15. (previously presented) A the method according to claim 8, wherein said workpieces are subjected to a sliding friction.
16. (previously presented) A method according to claim 8, wherein said workpieces are selected from the group consisting of axles, gear mechanism parts and engine pistons.

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